



National Education Policy 2020 in Higher Education

For Prelims: [National Education Policy \(NEP\) 2020](#), [India's higher education system](#), [National Research Foundation](#), [PARAKH](#)

For Mains: Salient Features of NEP 2020, Challenges in Implementing NEP 2020.

Source: TH

Why in News?

In a **special session of Parliament**, the **Parliament Standing Committee on Education**, presented a comprehensive report on the "**Implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in Higher Education.**"

- The report examined the **progress and challenges** in implementing this significant policy shift in India's higher education sector.

What are the Major Highlights of the Report?

- **Diversity of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs):**
 - The report emphasized that a **significant portion of India's higher education system operates under State Acts**, with **70% of universities falling under this category**.
 - Furthermore, **94% of students are enrolled in State or private institutions**, leaving just **6% in Central higher educational institutions**.
 - This underscores the critical role played by States in providing higher education
- **Key Issues Discussed:**
 - **Disciplinary Rigidity:** The panel raised concerns about the **rigid separation of disciplines**, which can **hinder interdisciplinary learning and innovation**.
 - **Limited Access in Disadvantaged Areas:** Access to higher education in **socio-economically disadvantaged regions** remains limited, impeding the equitable distribution of educational opportunities.
 - **Language Barriers:** There's a dearth of higher education institutes (HEIs) that **offer instruction in local languages**, potentially excluding a substantial section of the population.
 - **Faculty Shortage:** A scarcity of qualified faculty members is **plaguing the higher education sector**, adversely impacting the quality of education.
 - **Lack of Institutional Autonomy:** Many institutions face a lack of autonomy, hindering their ability to adapt and innovate.
 - **Research Emphasis:** The panel noted a diminished emphasis on research within the current higher education system.
 - **Ineffective Regulatory System:** The regulatory framework governing higher education was deemed ineffective, requiring comprehensive reform.
 - **Concern Related to Multiple Entry Multiple Exit Programme:** The panel expressed concerns that implementing the **MEME system** in Indian institutions, **while flexible in**

theory, may not align effectively due to unpredictability in student entry and exits. This unpredictability could **disrupt the [pupil-teacher ratio](#)**.

▪ **Recommendations:**

- **Equitable Funding:** Both the **Union and State Governments** should allocate sufficient funds to support **[Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups \(SEDGs\)](#) in higher education.**
 - Clear targets for the **[Gross Enrolment Ratio](#) should be set for SEDGs** to ensure increased access to higher education.
- **Gender Balance:** Efforts should be made to **enhance gender balance in admissions to HEIs.**
- **Inclusive Admissions and Curriculum:** Admission processes and curriculum should be made more **inclusive to cater to diverse learner needs.**
- **Regional Language Courses:** Development of **more degree courses** taught in regional languages and bilingually should be encouraged.
- **Accessibility for Physically Challenged:** Specific infrastructural steps should be taken to make higher education institutions **more accessible to physically challenged students.**
- **Anti-discrimination Measures:** Strict **enforcement of no-discrimination and anti-harassment rules** was recommended to ensure a safe and inclusive environment.
- **HEFA Diversification:** The **Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA)** should **diversify its funding sources beyond government allocations.**
 - Exploration of partnerships with private sector organizations, philanthropic foundations, and international financial institutions for funding should be pursued.

What is National Education Policy 2020?

▪ **About:**

- The **National Education Policy 2020** seeks to tackle the evolving development needs of India.
 - It calls for a **comprehensive overhaul of the education system**, including its **regulations and management**, to establish a modern system that aligns with 21st-century educational goals, including **[Sustainable Development Goal 4 \(SDG4\)](#)**, while respecting **India's cultural heritage and values.**
- It replaces the thirty-four year old **National Policy on Education, 1986, modified in 1992** (NPE 1986/92).

▪ **Salient Features:**

- **Universal Access:** NEP 2020 focuses on **universal access to school education**, including pre-school to secondary levels.
- **Early Childhood Education:** The **10+2 structure will shift to a 5+3+3+4 system**, bringing 3-6-year-olds under school curriculum, with a focus on **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE).**
- **Multilingualism:** **Mother tongue or regional language will be the medium of instruction till Grade 5**, with options for Sanskrit and other languages.
 - Indian Sign Language (ISL) will be standardized.
- **Inclusive Education:** Special emphasis on **Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs)**, support for children with disabilities, and **establishment of "Bal Bhavans."**
- **Elimination of Barriers:** The policy promotes a seamless education system with **no rigid distinctions between arts and sciences**, curricular and extracurricular activities, and vocational and academic streams.
- **GER Enhancement:** Aim to increase **Gross Enrolment Ratio from 26.3% to 50% by 2035**, adding 3.5 crore new seats.
- **Research Focus:** Creation of **[National Research Foundation](#)** to boost research culture and capacity.
- **Language Preservation:** Support for Indian languages, including an **Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI)** and strengthening language departments.
- **Internationalization:** Facilitation of international collaborations and **entry of [top-ranked foreign universities](#).**
- **Funding:** Joint efforts to increase **public investment in education to 6% of GDP.**

- **PARAKH Assessment Center:** The establishment of **PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development)** as a national assessment center signifies a significant step towards competency-based and holistic assessment in education.
- **Gender Inclusion Fund:** The policy introduces a **Gender Inclusion Fund**, emphasizing the importance of gender equality in education and supporting initiatives to empower disadvantaged groups.
- **Special Education Zones:** **Special Education Zones** are envisioned to address the specific needs of disadvantaged regions and groups, furthering the policy's commitment to equitable access to quality education for all.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Which of the following provisions of the Constitution does India have a bearing on Education? (2012)

1. Directive Principles of State Policy
2. Rural and Urban Local Bodies
3. Fifth Schedule
4. Sixth Schedule
5. Seventh Schedule

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 3, 4 and 5 only
(c) 1, 2 and 5 only
(d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Ans- (d)

Mains

Q1. How have digital initiatives in India contributed to the functioning of the education system in the country? Elaborate on your answer. **(2020)**

Q2. Discuss the main objectives of Population Education and point out the measures to achieve them in India in detail. **(2021)**